

SENATE RECORD VOTE ANALYSIS

104th Congress
1st Session

Vote No. 385

August 10, 1995, 6:08 p.m.
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DEFENSE APPROPRIATIONS/LHD-7 Cut, Operations Increase

SUBJECT: Department of Defense Appropriations Bill for fiscal year 1996 . . . S. 1087. Stevens motion to table the Bingaman amendment No. 2392.

ACTION: MOTION TO TABLE AGREED TO, 73-26

SYNOPSIS: As reported, S. 1087, the Department of Defense Appropriations Bill for fiscal year 1996, will appropriate \$242.7 billion for the military functions of the Department of Defense for fiscal year 1996, which is \$6.4 billion more than requested and \$2.3 billion less than the fiscal year (FY) 1995 funding level.

The Bingaman amendment would cut \$1.3 billion for the LHD-7 amphibious assault ship, and would increase various personnel and operation and maintenance accounts by a total of \$1.181 billion, with the intent of using those funds to pay for the costs of ongoing military operations in Iraq, Cuba, and Bosnia.

Debate was limited by unanimous consent. Following debate, Senator Stevens moved to table the Bingaman amendment. Generally, those favoring the motion to table opposed the amendment; those opposing the motion to table favored the amendment.

Those favoring the motion to table contended:

Let us be honest about what the Defense Department has requested. It has requested the level of funding which it was told to request by the Administration. Congress by no means has to provide the level of funding that the President requested. In fact, it is Congress' constitutional duty to exercise its power of the purse in determining the appropriate amount to spend on government functions, including defense. It is our firm opinion that the national security of this Nation is being severely compromised by a failure to modernize its forces with new, superior equipment. As the Congressional Budget Office has described it, our military forces are in a "procurement holiday." A decade ago the United States purchased 720 tanks a year. Today it buys none. Annual purchases of ships and aircraft have declined 80 percent and 87 percent, respectively. Dozens of major weapons programs and more than a hundred smaller ones have been terminated. Making matters worse, even much of the planned-for spending will not materialize,

(See other side)

YEAS (73)			NAYS (26)		NOT VOTING (1)	
Republicans (54 or 100%)	Democrats (19 or 42%)		Republicans (0 or 0%)	Democrats (26 or 58%)	Republicans (0)	Democrats (1)
Abraham	Hutchison	Akaka		Baucus		Bradley ⁻⁴
Ashcroft	Inhofe	Biden		Bingaman		
Bennett	Jeffords	Breaux		Boxer		
Bond	Kassebaum	Byrd		Bryan		
Brown	Kempthorne	Dodd		Bumpers		
Burns	Kyl	Feinstein		Conrad		
Campbell	Lott	Ford		Daschle		
Chafee	Lugar	Glenn		Dorgan		
Coats	Mack	Heflin		Exon		
Cochran	McCain	Hollings		Feingold		
Cohen	McConnell	Inouye		Graham		
Coverdell	Murkowski	Johnston		Harkin		
Craig	Nickles	Kennedy		Kerrey		
D'Amato	Packwood	Kerry		Kohl		
DeWine	Pressler	Lieberman		Lautenberg		
Dole	Roth	Mikulski		Leahy		
Domenici	Santorum	Nunn		Levin		
Faircloth	Shelby	Robb		Moseley-Braun		EXPLANATION OF ABSENCE:
Frist	Simpson	Sarbanes		Moynihan		1—Official Buisiness
Gorton	Smith			Murray		2—Necessarily Absent
Gramm	Snowe			Pell		3—Illness
Grams	Specter			Pryor		4—Other
Grassley	Stevens			Reid		
Gregg	Thomas			Rockefeller		SYMBOLS:
Hatch	Thompson			Simon		AY—Announced Yea
Hatfield	Thurmond			Wellstone		AN—Announced Nay
Helms	Warner					PY—Paired Yea
						PN—Paired Nay

Compiled and written by the staff of the Republican Policy Committee—Don Nickles, Chairman

because, according to the General Accounting Office, President Clinton's defense plan of last year, before he had asked for even more cuts, was already underfunded by as much as \$150 billion.

Given all these facts, the decision was made by both the Armed Services Committee and the defense appropriations subcommittee to recommend more for procurement than recommended by President Clinton. The additional funds will hardly meet all the procurement needs ignored by President Clinton; instead, they will only correct the most glaring failures. One such failure is the refusal to fund the LHD-7. We have a signed contract to procure the ship for \$1.3 billion this year. If we do not exercise that option now, it will cost an additional \$700 million to build it in the future. Even with the very limited amount that this Administration is willing to budget for procurement, the Navy has the LHD-7 in its future procurement plans (it plans on buying it in 2001). We can buy this ship this year for \$1.3 billion, or we can buy it in a few years for \$2 billion. The difference in cost is not limited to this \$700 million. Our forces are being constantly deployed in the post-Cold War world. The United States is largely a naval power--to project force, it needs sealift capabilities. Currently, the United States has six LHD's, but its deployment requirements are for seven. Because it only has six LHD's, an old ship, the U.S.S. *Guam*, has had to stay in service well beyond its retirement date in order to fill the gap. This ship is not an adequate substitute; it has lesser capabilities, it is far more manpower intensive, and it requires much more maintenance.

The Bingaman would cut funding for the LHD-7 in order to gain a funding source for ongoing operations. We are not certain that it is advisable to make regular appropriations for ongoing operations no matter what the funding source. Congress' greatest leverage over military operations is its power of the purse. Not since Vietnam has Congress been willing to approve operations spending in advance. We think our colleagues are being a bit too quick in advocating a change in this policy.

If Senators support failing to modernize our military by refusing to make needed procurements, and if they favor weakening Congress' control over the President's use of military force around the world, they should vote in favor of the Bingaman amendment. We do not, and therefore will support the motion to table.

Those opposing the motion to table contended:

The Bingaman amendment would shift funds from a low-priority program to pay expenses that we know we are going to incur but for which we have not budgeted. The program from which it would take funding is the LHD-7 amphibious assault ship procurement program. We already have 6 LHD's, plus we have other amphibious ships in our inventory. There is no urgent need to pay for a seventh LHD this year. The ship is indeed a technological marvel, and the Defense Department does eventually wish to acquire the LHD-7, but under its defense plan it does not budget for it until the year 2001. Eliminating the acquisition of this ship on this bill will save \$1.3 billion. The Bingaman amendment would use those savings for an expense which we know will occur, but for which we have not budgeted--the costs of ongoing operations. In a recent meeting we had with General Shalikashvili, he told us that the costs of military actions in Bosnia, Iraq, and Cuba will total \$1.88 in fiscal year 1996. Unless Congress has the foresight to pay for those operations in this appropriations bill, he told us that it would be absolutely necessary for the Defense Department to come back later this year with a supplemental request. We oppose giving the Defense Department any more money than we have already agreed to give in this bill. This bill is billions of dollars above the amount requested; one of the reasons is because the appropriators added funding for the LHD-7, against the Defense Department's wishes. We should strike this low-priority spending, and use the savings to pay for the costs of ongoing operations. We support the Bingaman amendment, which makes this sensible proposal.